



Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species
Program
Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
Route 135
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MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

MILLET GRASS

(Milium effusum L.)

DESCRIPTION

Milium effusum is a perennial woodland grass. It has a smooth, somewhat succulent, slender stem that grows 3½-5' (1-1.5m.) tall. Leaf blades are generally 4-8" (10-20cm.) long and 1/3-1/2" (8-15mm.) wide. The panicle (flowering part) is sparse-looking, 4-8" long with branches which extend outward and carry drooping spikelets. Milium effusum is notable for its delicate pastel green color and whitish bloom on the stem. Spikelets can be found from late May to September.

HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Millet Grass is typically found on steep slopes in rich, mesic forest communities with calcareous soils. Its microhabitat often includes the drier, rocky upper slopes of the woodland. Commonly associated species include Fagus grandifolia (Beech), Acer saccharum (Sugar Maple), Betula papyrifera (White Birch), Solidago macrophylla (Broad-leaved Golden-rod), Allium tricoccum (Wild leeks), and Carex platyphylla (Broad-leaved Sedge).

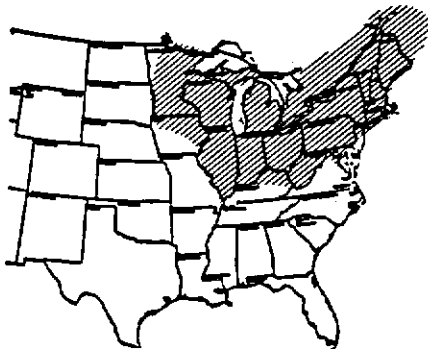
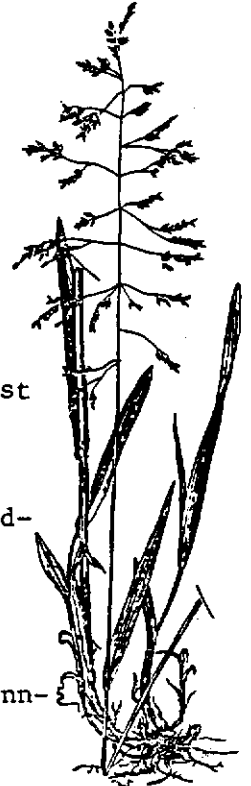
RANGE

Millet Grass is distributed from Nova Scotia and Quebec, west to Minnesota and south to West Virginia and Illinois.

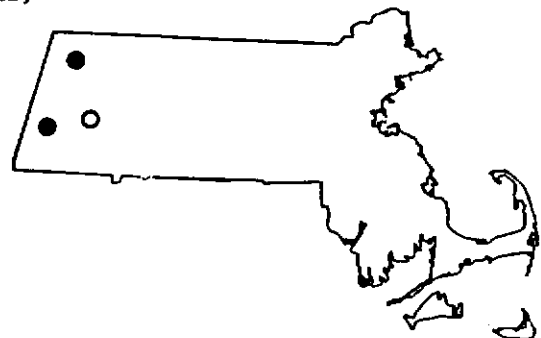
POPULATION STATUS

Millet Grass is currently considered "Threatened" in Massachusetts. It has probably never been very abundant in Massachusetts and its rarity is in part related to the relatively few steeply sloped mesic forest communities in the state. Except for one, all populations are small, scattered, and vulnerable.
(continued overleaf)

Mitchcock, A.S. Manual of the Grasses of
the United States. Dover Publications, Inc.
1971 reprint of 1950 ed.



Distribution of Millet Grass



● Verified since 1978
○ Reported prior to 1978

Distribution in Massachusetts by Town

MILLET GRASS (continued)

able to disturbance. Five current occurrences have been documented (1978 to present), and two historical occurrences (prior to 1978) have been recorded.